



Pioneer Telephone Cooperative
108 E. Roberts
Kingfisher, Oklahoma 73750
www.pldi.net

June 4, 2010

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: In the Matter of Petition for Rulemaking to Amend the Commission's
Rules Governing Retransmission Consent, MB Docket No. 10-71

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On May 18, 2010, in the above referenced docket, the American Cable Association (ACA) filed comments in support of the Commission initiating a rulemaking to address the harms arising to consumers from the current retransmission consent regime. Among the harms addressed in the ACA comments is the problem that arises when entities jointly negotiate on behalf of two or more "Big 4" television broadcast stations (or multiple affiliates of a single station) in a single DMA. (Joint negotiations may occur because the stations are under common ownership or, if they are separately owned, because they have entered into agreements to negotiate together.) The ACA, presented evidence indicating that, where joint negotiations occur, retransmission fees are significantly higher than when stations negotiate separately.

Pioneer Long Distance is a multi-channel video programming distributor operating in numerous markets. As such, we have extensive experience in negotiating retransmission consent agreements with television broadcasters. In select instances, we negotiate with entities that jointly represent two "Big 4" television broadcast stations in a single DMA. On that basis, we have undertaken a review of our carriage agreements and have found that they support the conclusions set forth by the ACA. Let us elaborate further on the methodology for our review and the results.

We examined our "Big 4" carriage arrangements¹ to determine the fees that we currently pay to carry each "Big 4" station in each DMA in which we operate a cable system. We then classified each "Big 4" station in a DMA into one of two groups. The first group -- jointly negotiated "Big 4" stations -- consists of stations where the entity that negotiates carriage

¹ This group included "Big 4" stations that elected retransmission consent or must carry.

arrangements (including fees) for the station in question also negotiates carriage arrangements for at least one additional "Big 4" station in the same DMA. The second group -- separately negotiated "Big 4" stations -- consists of stations where the entity negotiating carriage arrangements for the station in question does not negotiate carriage arrangements for any other "Big 4" station in the same DMA. Using the fees in these carriage arrangements, we found that the average fee that we pay for jointly negotiated "Big 4" stations is 30% higher than the average fee that we pay for separately controlled "Big 4" stations.

We request that this letter, which is being filed electronically, be placed in the file for the above-captioned proceeding.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Ulsaker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Scott" and "Ulsaker" being capitalized and prominent.

Scott Ulsaker
Manager Pioneer Long Distance
Pioneer Telephone Cooperative
108 E. Roberts
Kingfisher, Oklahoma 73750